Mine blast casualties

106. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA:
SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU):
DR. AKHILESH DAS:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian troops posted along the 1800 mile border between India and Pakistan, while withdrawing from their positions, left behind the mines laid by them along the border;

(b) if so, whether any more casualties due to mine blasts have since taken place along the border;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken to remove the mines and to prevent any casualties therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) The Indian troops on the International Border (IB) have since been re-deployed. Mines laid on the IB during Operation Parakram are being removed and the requisite number of troops have been deployed for the mine clearance operations. Till date, the following casualties have taken place during the demining phase:

(i)	Killed	—	Four
(ii)	Injured	—	Forty Five

Personnel involved in the de-mining operations have been provided with protective gear including bullet proof jackets, helmets with visors and anti-mine boots. All efforts are on to keep adequate guards to ensure that no civilian enters a minefield by mistake and becomes a casualty.

Steps to boost the morale of Army Troops

107. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Army is suffering from acute fatigue on account of counter-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir and Operation Parakram; and

(b) the action proposed to ensure health maintenance of Army Troops and boost their morale?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) & (b) No, Sir. The morale of the Indian Army is very high. In order to maintain high morale and keep the soldiers stress-free, the Medical Directorate of Army Headquarters has taken the following action:—

(i) The Regimental Medical Officers (RMOs) have been instructed to identify and counsel individuals who show any signs of stress.

(ii) The Zonal Hospitals hold seminars for training the RMOs with appropriate skills to fulfil their role.

(iii) Commanders at all levels have been apprised about how to identify the stress victims and about action to be taken at various levels.

(iv) In addition to the above, short training capsules of relaxation exercises, regular Sainik Sammelan and visits by religious teachers are organised. Regular rotation of Units and individuals, regular leave, prompt attention to grievance, congenial working atmosphere and provision of family accommodation etc. are ensured to the maximum extent so that stress related incidences are kept to the minimum.

Non-utilisation of Defence Funds

108. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRASEKAR REDDY:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been reported in the Economic Times dated the 23rd December, 2002 that Rs. 3,000 crore kept for weapons is lying unutilised, so far;

(b) if so, what were the main reasons for not utilising the fund for purchase of weapons;

(c) whether any inquiry has been conducted in this regard;

(d) if so, who are responsible for this and action taken against them;